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lances: had the knights charged on horseback, on the open meadow of Sempach, the Swiss might have fared very badly. Mr. Rook omits the important civil war between the inner Cantons and Zurich which culminated in the bloody battle of St. Jacob on the Sihl (1443), and nearly threw Zurich back into the arms of Austria, and had its last frightful echo on the banks of the Birs near Basle in 1444, in the battle of St. Jacob on the Birs, where 1,500 Swiss, with more ferocity than judgment, kept up a reckless attack on a French army of over 30,000 men with artillery, until only a dozen of their number were left alive.

The author's treatment of Swiss history, from the beginning of the sixteenth century on, is excellent. His picture of the sad period of the invasion by France (1798-99) could not be better. And his appreciation of the conduct of Napoleon, the personal episodes woven into the tale of general events, is of great interest. There is an air of actuality in the various scenes of Napoleon's deportment during his re-establishment of the Confederacy on a new basis that lends them a peculiar charm.

We may object to a statement made early in the book—namely, that Switzerland has no aristocracy. It has no more a feudal aristocracy, but the origin of several families still in existence with the prefix "von," or "de," was feudal. And these families, as well as those who up to 1830 were the heads of cantonal oligarchies, cling to their titles without ostentation. They have ceased to enjoy prerogatives of a political character, but they maintain their social traditions in a dignified and by no means offensive manner.

As an Englishman, Mr. Rook naturally dwells with a certain predilection on Geneva and its environs, where so many great men of Britain have left touching and indelible marks. But he exaggerates the importance of Voltaire for the intellectual development of Switzerland. The tendency of the so-called Philosopher of Ferney was mostly disintegrating for everything he dealt with. With the positive character of the Swiss such a negative element did not, and could not, obtain much foothold. Neither did Rousseau exert a powerful influence on the methods of education practically introduced by Pestalozzi. He and Lavater were men of profound religious sentiment, and the *Émile* was no guide to them. They respected Rousseau (as every honest thinker will), but what they did and wrote rested, above all, on the basis of Christian ideas, rather than on philosophic theory. In the review of scientific achievements by Swiss, in former centuries, we miss the great names of Conrad Gessner, Albrecht von Haller, and, also, proper mention of the city of Basle. Already in the sixteenth century Basle was the place where important geographic works, touching, also, upon America, were printed, and two centuries later the great names of Euler and the Bernoulli family attached the fame of Basle permanently to the world of mathematical and physical science. These are points of comparatively minor importance, and by no means impair the general value of the work.

The chapters on sport, chiefly winter sport, in Switzerland are entertaining, and particularly well illustrated. They furnish the author with an occasion to allude to climate and topography, in a manner not often found in analogous literature.

A. F. B.

Nearest the North Pole. A Narrative of the Polar Expedition of the Peary Arctic Club in the S.S. Roosevelt, 1905-1906. By R. E. Peary, U. S. N. xx and 411 pp., 99 Photographs, 2 Maps, a Frontispiece in colour by Albert Operti, and Index. Doubleday, Page & Company, New York, 1907.

Peary's latest book is a most valuable addition to Arctic literature. It is the

record of a splendid achievement, written by a man who is pre-eminent for his genius in polar research, and for his long consecration to it. The illustrations are superb, and the publishers have issued the book with all the care they are giving to their notable series of geographical works.

Peary's recent work, described in this book, is unique, not only because he achieved the nearest approach to the pole, but also for other reasons. It was the first Arctic expedition, five-sevenths of whose personnel were men, women, and children of a barbarous tribe. Of the eight men who, in April, 1906, stood at the most northern point ever reached by human beings, six were Eskimos. They had no idea why Peary took them on that terrible journey over the frozen sea, but they trusted him implicitly, followed where he led, and faithfully did the work he gave them to do. Earlier explorers gave these Smith Sound natives a bad reputation. They were reported to be worthless for sledging, always unreliable, and even treacherous at times. But Peary knew them through and through, and he says, in the tribute he pays them, that the north pole will some day be reached with their help.

Peary's ready resource, when he meets the unexpected that so often happens in the Arctic, pulled him through some unpleasant situations in last year's experience. He had, for example, 200 dogs that were essential to his proposed journey to the pole. But one day he found that the whale meat he had provided for them was spoiled, and he was face to face with the problem of supporting his dogs and most of his Eskimos on the resources of the country. He at once scattered the hunters with their women, children, and the dogs in little groups of snow houses, some of them as far away as Lake Hazen, 150 miles from the ship. The dogs lived on the musk oxen, deer, and hides supplied for them, and sledge-loads of meat were taken to the ship. We never knew before that there were such abounding resources in the game of Grant Land.

The exploring steamer *Roosevelt*, which had been built from Peary's plans, was a great success, and he believes that no other ship ever could have lived through the terrible hours when she was hugged by many square miles of heavy floes that seemed bent on grinding her to pieces. She did not always emerge unscathed, but she accomplished everything for which she was built.

Peary was engaged about five months in the field work he went north to do. In that time he was aboard his ship only eight days. As a test of human endurance the work of those months was wonderful. Few explorers have ever rendered in so short a time so much geographical service. He outstripped all previous efforts to approach the pole, and if it had not been for the wide water-lanes that delayed him for many days he would probably have reached the pole. He made this journey over the sea ice through four degrees of latitude, and then went on a round trip of about 600 miles along the coast of Grant Land. One hundred and fifty miles of that shore-line is his own, and we see it now for the first time on the map in his book. He also saw a new land out in the ocean to the west which he named Crocker Land, and he solved the mystery of the paleocrystic ice discovered by Nares in 1875. He found that the birthplace of these floebergs is a long stretch of the Grant Land coast, where many glaciers come down to the shore and rub along the shallow sea bottom till they break off into bergs, and drift to the eastward.

The book gives the whole story of this remarkable expedition. We see Peary's methods of work, the outcome of his originality and experience. The narrative is interesting throughout, for the writer has his way of telling things, and he puts nervous energy into his written records. The dramatic element is strong in many a situation that confronts him, and it does not evaporate when he tries to put it on paper.